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ABSTRACT

This report was prepared for inclusion in New York City's application for a CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) Title III program for persons with limited English speaking ability. Utilizing data from the 1970 national census, information is given on the racial/linguistic background of New York City residents compared to the United States population; place of origin of some of New York City's immigrant population; mother tongue of some of New York's population compared to national totals; and immigration and geographic mobility of the population between 1965 and 1970. The report then goes beyond the statistics to examine some of the problems, including employment needs, which face minority groups. (MC)

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LANGUAGE MINORITIES

IN

NEW YORK CITY

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(Prepared for inclusion in New York City's application for a special CETA Title III program for persons with limited English speaking ability)

UD 018 307

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LANGUAGE MINORITIES IN NEW YORK CITY

New York City has a greater need for special funds to support programs for persons of limited English speaking ability than any other area in the U.S.A.

Throughout its history New York has always been, and continues to be, the leading port of entry for in-migration to the U.S. The effect of New York City's role is reflected, albeit imperfectly, in official census data. These data partially reveal the ethnic and linguistic diversity of New York City's population, and its continuing importance as the chief center for immigration from non English speaking lands. But the complexity and details of the City's needs are only hinted at in the official statistical tabulations.

The City's concentration of ethnic and linguistic minorities is highlighted in the available data from the 1970 Census. These data show the City's high concentration, compared to the rest of the U.S., of ethnic minorities, which also often reflect distinct linguistic backgrounds.

In 1970, New York City accounted for only 3.8 percent of the total U.S. White population, and 7.2 percent of the total number of Black Americans. But the City was home to 16 percent of the United States' Chinese citizens, 12 percent of its Spanish Americans and 25.9 percent of the total number of persons of other racial background.[1]

[1] All figures presented here are based on official U.S. Census data, which are admittedly subject to substantial undercounting. The Urban League estimates that 143,000 Black New Yorkers were not counted in 1970, and the City University of New York's Population Health Survey estimates that the 1970 Census omitted at least 200,000 Puerto Ricans. See also Deborah Klein, "Determining the Labor Force Status of Men Missed in the Census," Monthly Labor Review, March 1970.

TABLE I

BACKGROUND OF NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS COMPARED TO U.S. POPULATION

RACIAL/LINGUISTIC GROUP	U.S.A.	NEW YORK CITY	N.Y.C. % of U.S.A.
White	178,120,995	6,848,841	3.8
Black	22,539,362	1,618,115	7.2
Spanish American*	9,294,509	1,150,272	12.0
Chinese	433,469	69,324	16.0
Japanese	586,675	13,960	2.4
Philippines	336,823	11,207	3.3
American Indian	760,572	9,930	1.3
Korean	70,598	4,239	6.0
Hawaiian	98,836	717	.7
Other	264,602	68,521	25.9

* Also included among White and Black racial categories

A more detailed analysis of those City residents who were either born abroad or who are first generation Americans whose parents were born abroad, shows that New York City accounts for one out of every seven (14 percent) of the country's relatively recent in-migrants.

A relatively high proportion of the total U.S. immigrant population is found for the following places of origin:

TABLE II

PLACE OF ORIGIN OF SELECTED PORTIONS OF NEW YORK CITY'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION (PERSONS BORN ABROAD, OR FIRST GENERATION AMERICANS

PLACE OF ORIGIN	U.S.A.	N.Y.C.	N.Y.C. % of U.S.A.
Europe			
Ireland	1,450,220	220,622	15%
Poland	2,374,244	292,319	12%
Austria	975,325	145,981	15%
Greece	434,571	63,854	15%
Italy	4,240,779	682,613	16%
U.S.S.R.	1,943,195	393,918	20%
Asia			
China	339,243	56,217	17%
Central and South America (total)	3,862,749	459,319	12%
C & S America, except Mexico (Subtotal)	1,523,698	451,426	30%

The City's linguistic diversity is further reflected in the data on the "mother tongue" of New York's population. In 1970, while the City contained only 4 percent of U.S. residents whose primary language is English, it accounted for 14 percent of those whose mother tongue is Italian, 16 percent for Spanish, 15 percent for Greek, 18 percent for Chinese, 34 percent for persons whose native language is Yiddish, and 14 percent for Russian.

TABLE III

MOTHER TONGUE OF SELECTED GROUPS IN NEW YORK CITY'S POPULATION COMPARED TO U.S. TOTALS

Native Language	Number		N.Y.C's % of U.S.A.
	U.S.A.	N.Y.C.	
Spanish	7,823,583	1,150,272	15%
Italian	4,144,315	652,959	16%
Yiddish	1,593,993	543,218	34%
French (incl. Haitian)	4,643,742	92,148	20%
Greek	458,699	68,089	15%
Chinese	345,431	61,928	18%
Russian	334,615	46,000	14%

Many of the City's older immigrant groups, who arrived prior to World War II, have largely adapted to the linguistic and cultural demands of the U.S. economy. The primary exceptions are those individuals who were born and have continued to live in the City's many cultural and linguistic enclaves, in which English is rarely a necessity for daily life. But in addition to these older, more established groups, the influx of newcomers to the U.S. mainland continued to flow into New York City in the 1960's and 1970's.

Detailed data on the place of origin and language of these most recent arrivals is not available, but the overall magnitude of the flow is apparent. In 1970, a total of 310,700 New York City residents had moved here from abroad during the previous 5 years, for an annual average net immigration rate of over 60,000 per year. This does not count persons coming from Puerto Rico or those who may have entered the country through New York City during that period, but who moved elsewhere prior to the 1970 census.

Altogether, in 1970 New York City was home to one out of eight (11.5%) of the total number of individuals who had moved to the U.S. from abroad during the preceding five year period.

TABLE IV

IN-MIGRATION AND GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY OF THE POPULATION BETWEEN 1965 AND 1970

	Number		N.Y.C's % of U.S.A.
	U.S.A.	N.Y.C.	
Total residents age 5 and over	186,094,074	7,279,064	3.9%
Moved from different house in U.S.A.	75,093,663	2,252,284	3.0%
Moved from Abroad (In-migration).	2,696,610	310,700	11.5%

These statistics document only a small part of New York City's need for special funding for programs to serve persons with language handicaps. They do not reveal, for example, that the City's Chinese community which had remained stable at about 28,000 during the years when racially restrictive immigration laws severely limited the immigration of Chinese, has mushroomed since 1965, now reaching to an estimated 130,000, with most of the growth occurring outside the City's traditional "Chinatown." Nor do they include an estimated 4,000 Vietnamese refugees who fled their country during the last year and who now reside in New York City.

Some of the economic problems faced by persons who come from communities in the U.S. or abroad which speak a language other than English are common to all groups. These include the impossibility of obtaining adequate employment as long as fluency in English is limited, even if the individual has highly developed job skills. This has forced many newcomers

with experience in clerical, sales, managerial and professional areas to accept low level jobs as laborers, restaurant workers or workers in the City's lowest paying manufacturing industries.

In addition, the present catastrophic state of the City's economy has stopped a trend toward movement into the economic mainstream by highly motivated young people who have come through the City's school system, often gone on to college and graduate school, but who are entering a labor market which no longer provides initial entry level white collar or professional jobs for which they had, with much effort, prepared themselves.

Other problems encountered are the result of the clash of cultures, sometimes with highly dissimilar values and orientations toward the "world of work." Thus recent immigrants from a socialist economy such as the U.S.S.R. must bridge a gap in attitudes and work-related behavior patterns which is different from that encountered by a newcomer from Greece, Haiti, China or Puerto Rico. No single project can hope to accommodate this diversity of background and need.

The largest and best documented group of newcomers to the U.S. mainland are the City's Puerto Ricans, though even here the statistics tell only a small part of the story.

A recently released report on New York City's Puerto Rican population reveals that, despite gains in educational levels, and an improving occupational profile, Puerto Ricans in New York City have, as a group, fallen even further behind the rest of the City's population in terms of income and economic well being. To a great extent, this adverse trend may be attributed to the special difficulties presented to New York City's Puerto Rican community by the language barrier. This problem, in addition to educational deficiencies, has effectively excluded the City's Puerto Rican population

from the least hard hit sectors of the economy - finance, business services, communication, industries, etc. - and concentrated them in "blue collar" sectors that have had higher than average job losses.[1]

The employment and economic problems of other linguistic minorities are even less well documented than those of the City's Hispanics, but are nonetheless severe.

The City's Asian-American community has long been confined, for the most part, to the low-wage service sector of the economy, especially to traditionally Chinese industries - such as laundries and restaurants. The fact that a large proportion of the City's Asian-American population has been geographically concentrated around Canal Street ("Chinatown") has also impeded occupational and economic mobility, even for those residents who are born and brought up here.

The emigration of Jewish refugees from Soviet Russia is frequently in the news as an international political issue. The cultural, social and economic difficulties faced by those Russian emigrants who find their way to New York City is less well known. In addition to overcoming language barriers, persons trained and educated under the Soviet economic system must learn how to look for a job, conduct themselves in a job interview, and adapt to the standards and expectations of American employers.

The City's Greek population has also been augmented recently by an increased level of immigration. Traditionally specializing in restaurant work as well as comprising the bulk of the City's licensed street vendors, the newly arrived Greek immigrants are in great need of improved avenues of upward occupational mobility.

The most recent of all immigrant groups are the Vietnamese refugees. Only months ago most were living in temporary refugee camps, with no idea of

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[1] For details, see Socio Economic Profile of Puerto Rican New Yorkers, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 1976.

what part of the country they would ultimately settle in. The 1,000-2,000 Vietnamese refugees who are now struggling to find a place in New York City are only beginning to develop their own self-help organizations, which is the first step in the long path to economic self-sufficiency.

Appendix Tables I and II give New York City's share of all the national and linguistic groups listed in the U.S. Census. Within each major geographical area, individual countries are listed in order of their numbers in New York City, with the largest groups appearing at the top and the smallest at the bottom of the list.

It should be noted that second and third generation Americans are no longer identified by national origin, since the Census records country of origin only for those who were born abroad or whose parents (or parent) were born abroad.. In addition, immigrants from Puerto Rico, being American citizens, are not identified by country of origin (Table I), but are included among the Spanish-speaking population in Table II.

APPENDIX TABLE I

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF FOREIGN BORN AND FIRST GENERATION AMERICANS IN NEW YORK CITY AND U.S.A.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PERSONS		N.Y.C. % OF U.S.A.
	NEW YORK CITY	U.S.A.	
Europe (including USSR)	2,505,331	23,552,862	11%
Italy	682,613	4,240,779	16%
USSR	393,918	1,943,195	20%
Poland	292,319	2,374,244	12%
Ireland	220,622	1,450,220	15%
Germany	210,040	3,622,035	6%
Austria	145,981	975,325	15%
United Kingdom	116,342	2,465,050	5%
Hungary	72,071	603,668	12%
Greece	63,854	434,571	15%
Roumania	51,745	216,803	24%
Czechoslovakia	45,960	759,527	6%
France	29,902	343,367	9%
Yugoslavia	26,077	447,271	6%
Spain	23,225	155,156	15%
Norway	23,217	614,649	4%
Lithuania	21,536	330,977	7%
Sweden	16,148	806,138	2%
Latvia	8,885	86,413	10%
Switzerland	8,201	218,708	4%
Netherlands	7,259	383,709	2%
Finland	6,954	203,826	3%
Belgium	6,804	130,650	5%
Denmark	6,604	325,561	2%
Portugal	5,956	240,566	2%
Albania	2,989	22,580	13%
Estonia	2,266	20,507	11%
Bulgaria	1,619	20,553	8%
Luxembourg	569	20,618	3%
Iceland	545	9,768	6%
All other Europe	11,074	86,428	13%
Asia, (Eastern and Western, except USSR)	160,720	1,745,362	9%
China	56,217	339,243	17%
Turkey	18,806	106,806	18%
Israel	17,561	59,097	30%
Philippine Islands	12,046	350,082	3%
Japan	11,007	393,789	3%
Syria	6,664	59,489	11%
India	6,445	75,533	9%
Lebanon	3,727	85,381	4%
Korea	3,654	70,198	5%
Pakistan	1,391	9,308	15%
All other East Asian	12,519	108,006	12%
All other West Asian	10,623	88,430	12%

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PERSONS — NEW YORK CITY	U.S.A.	N.Y.C. % OF U.S.A.
North & Central America	414,752	6,507,946	6%
Cuba	84,179	560,628	15%
Dominican Republic	66,914	83,647	80%
Jamaica	55,157	105,110	52%
Canada	50,564	3,034,556	2%
British West Indies	30,288	55,055	55%
Haiti	25,727	37,469	69%
Trinidad and Tobago	18,080	30,666	59%
Panama	15,225	38,196	40%
Mexico	7,893	2,339,151	a
Honduras	6,785	31,150	22%
Costa Rica	4,429	25,840	17%
British Honduras	3,441	14,221	24%
Guatemala	2,036	26,865	8%
Nicaragua	2,014	28,620	7%
El Salvador	1,022	23,502	4%
Other West Indies	40,998	73,270	56%
South America	95,131	389,459	24%
Colombia	27,657	84,921	33%
Equador	20,326	49,491	41%
Argentina	13,327	67,364	20%
Brazil	5,577	46,753	12%
Peru	5,438	35,450	15%
Venezuela	3,410	17,321	20%
Chile	3,328	25,125	13%
Uruguay	1,220	7,041	17%
Bolivia	1,218	10,187	12%
Other South America	13,630	45,806	30%
Africa	18,755	106,233	18%
Egypt	7,642	31,358	24%
Union of South Africa	1,385	15,958	9%
Other North Africa	3,676	22,105	17%
All Other Africa	6,042	36,812	16%
All Other Countries	111,333	1,273,370	9%
Australia	2,324	62,754	4%
New Zealand	545	19,245	3%
Azores	359	77,892	a
Trust Territory of Pacific Islands	22	1,109	2%
Other Atlantic Islands	5,426	56,084	10%
Other Pacific Islands	171	14,810	1%
Country Not Specified	102,486	1,041,476	10%

[a] Less than 1 percent

APPENDIX TABLE II

MOTHER TONGUE OF THE POPULATION, NEW YORK CITY AND U.S.A.

LANGUAGE	NEW YORK CITY	U.S.A.	N.Y.C. % OF U.S.A.
English	4,043,475	160,717,113	3%
Spanish	1,150,272	7,823,583	15%
Italian	652,959	4,144,315	16%
Yiddish	543,218	1,593,995	34%
German	263,844	6,093,114	4%
Polish	105,300	2,437,938	4%
French	92,148	4,643,742	20%
Greek	68,089	458,699	15%
Chinese	61,928	345,431	18%
Hungarian	43,550	447,497	
Russian	42,224	334,615	14%
Ukranian	19,028	249,351	8%
Norwegian	17,746	612,862	3%
Czech.	16,628	452,812	4%
Arabic	14,694	193,520	8%
Slovak	13,349	510,366	3%
Lithuanian	13,001	292,820	4%
Serbo-Croatian	12,917	239,455	5%
Swedish	12,187	626,102	2%
Japanese	10,444	408,504	3%
Portugese	8,271	356,300	2%
Roumanian	8,167	56,590	14%
Dutch	6,163	350,748	2%
Finnish	4,904	214,168	3%
Danish	3,942	194,462	2%
Slovenian	1,506	82,321	2%
Native American Languages.	1,044	268,205	a
All Other	154,627	1,780,053	9%
Not Reported	505,173	9,317,873	5%

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[a] Less than 1 percent